not on my watch

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by herding_elephants

Summary

Will cannot fall asleep again after one of their late night murders. When he checks on their son, he finds the boy gone and almost is too late to safe him from a will-o-wisp with one of their pets.

Notes

I borrowed cat Austėja from one of Maidenhair_Tree's harpsichord stories:
https://archiveofourown.org/works/47229577
Go read it it's amazing!

- Inspired by What The Harpsichord Saw: The Flu Edition by Maidenhair_Tree

There was nothing Beor liked more than taking off outside with the dogs on his heels as soon as he had finished the little homework he had at his age. It was rare that Hannibal did not allow him to be outside as long as he wished to – or until dinner was ready. Only the weather managed to keep him inside. While Hannibal was not opposed to let him outside during bad weather provided he wore the proper clothes he did not allow him to spend hours out then, no matter how much Beor complained and begged.

The freedom he was used to by now out here in Wolf Trap over is previous home in Baltimore was not something he liked to have restricted – not even for a single day.

It had been quite a long period of change for them – Hannibal and Beor moving out here, leaving the city back although the house in Baltimore still belonged to them and was often used for the extravagant dinner parties Hannibal liked to throw. Will had made sure to fix the house up – allowing not only him and Hannibal to have a comfortable space to live but Beor as well.

The boy had been undecided at first if he had liked their life in Baltimore better but had gotten used to the change quite quickly. The dogs had been the biggest draw for him. Since he met them for the first time they would not leave his side no matter where he was. Dutifully they followed him on all his adventures outside as well as inside and allowed him to do almost everything with them.

Hannibal had ultimately decided to quit his job as a psychiatrist to spend his time between his son and Will as well as indulging his every whim. His existing wealth as well as continuous smart investments allowed him to never be concerned about his and his son's future and there were simply much better ways to spend his time. He indulged his interest in the arts as a benefactor to many local artists and there were few things happening in art around Baltimore without his direct or indirect influence. Hannibal indulged in his music as well – rarely there was a day he did not play the harpsichord he had brought with him to Wolf Trap and most importantly he put great interest and personal involvement in his son's education.

Even their marital murder urges were always indulged, neither of them very worried about leaving their son in the capable paws of their dogs and the watchful eye of several cameras throughout the house for a few hours during the night. Beor had never woken up during those nights and while the concern over him waking up and finding them gone always was present, it did not stop them from indulging those urges when needed.

Often only one of them left, especially if it was only to fill their freezer but the tableaus were something reserved for both of them working hand in hand. Will had insisted on that in the beginning, concerned about Jack sniffing out something about Hannibal eventually and arguing that he could ensure nothing would ever point to them if he was involved in both the crime and the investigation and Hannibal hadn't protested much. He enjoyed Will indulging his urges far too much to argue against him.

As summer turned into autumn Beor's adventures outside started to grow shorter. The sun started to go down earlier and it got colder so his daddy called him inside long before dinner now. No matter how much he complained or argued, his daddy was merciless.

One member of their family appreciated his prolonged presence inside the house. Their cat Austėja joined his faithful doggy followers as both their queen and leader and trailed after him in every room, always in reach to get petted and talked to.

Like Hannibal Beor rarely spoke English to the cat. Whether she understood him or not remained a mystery. She did refuse to bring back the balls he threw for her, no matter what he said.

Beor refused to even entertain the idea of bedtime without his cat. Dutifully she even followed him in the bathroom, sitting at the edge of the bathtub while he took a bath and pawing at his toys as well as sitting by his feet when he brushed his teeth. Will had almost fallen over her more than once and had made it a habit to not walk by him too close as the cat always was nearby and he never wanted to hurt her – even by accident.

Her reward for her undying loyalty was a spot in Beor's bed during the night. She was the only pet to be allowed upstairs at bedtime and to put even a paw on any of their beds. Beor had spent considerable time begging for the dogs to be allowed to sleep with him in his bed since they moved to Wolf Trap but Hannibal had stayed firm on this rule, until Austėja had come to them.

Austėja was missing an eye, an ear and a front paw. She had been saved by Hannibal after being hit by a car and after her life had been saved, she had moved in with them, enjoying a life of sleeping in the sun and a constant stream of fresh fish. She almost never joined Beor's adventures outside, at most she sat on the porch watching him and the dogs play, her face not showing whether she would like to join in.

Beor loved her with all his heart and was always the first one to defend her from anyone daring to say something about how she looked or her missing limb. There were few who made this mistake twice.

This evening Will was waiting for the clock to strike midnight since he had woken up. Hannibal had suggested to use this night for a little hunting he had planned, some especially nasty pigs he had taken notice of and Will was desperate to let off some steam. October seemed to have a weird effect even on the FBI and Jack had spoken of nothing but the Ripper for the last two weeks.

Although Hannibal rarely did something to prove other people right – especially Jack – they decided to indulge him this once with a new sounder and something to do until Christmas.

Beor had fought sleep for a while, insisting on staying up for yet another story and Hannibal struggled to get him to sleep. Eventually, after sorting his stuffed animals several times, getting tucked in more than once, three stories and Austėja cuddling close, he succumbed to much needed sleep. Hannibal sat by his side for a few minutes longer to not wake him back up right away and then came downstairs.

Will had held off any alcohol to not impact their hunt but allowed Hannibal to brew them some black tea and they sat together in silence, listening to any noise outside and inside the house until it was time to go.

Hannibal drove, changing their car halfway through while Will could barely sit still in anticipation of their plans.

Hours later, as the sky started to turn grew on the edges, they were on their way home, bloody but happy and satisfied and the cooler in the trunk running. Both were in perfect moods despite knowing that they would be tired all day.

They snuck inside and put away the meat into the fridge and freezer before cleaning up. Before he went to bed, Hannibal checked on Beor who was still sleeping as they had left him. They did not talk any more as they needed every minute of sleep before Beor would wake them up in only a few short hours demanding breakfast.

Will startled awake after what felt like only ten minutes although a glance out of the windows told him that it had been at least an hour. Groaning he glanced at his alarm clock and sank back in the pillow. Hannibal by his side was completely out, Will figured that not even a tornado would rise him. He tried to find out what had woken him up as it seemed impossible to fall right back asleep.

He hadn't dreamt badly and Beor wasn't in their room. It still startled him whenever the boy jumped in their bed, never having much consideration for their sleep when he was awake.

No matter what Will tried he could not fall back asleep because a gnawing feeling started to creep up in him. After checking his clock for the third time he knew that he could not fall asleep until he had made sure that everything was alright.

Not even his empathy could have prepared him for the anxiety that came with having a child in his life and care and worrying about said child every second of every day. Hannibal had assured him that it was normal and simply a part of being a parent but Will didn't think he would ever get used to it.

Beor woke up from Austėja moving by his side and walking over his chest to jump out of bed. He yawned and sat up, rubbing his eyes to see something in the still dark room. Austėja had already left the room so he got up and followed her. Maybe she needed to go outside or she was hungry.

The floor was cold but he didn't stop to put on his slippers and slipped through the half open door. It creaked when he opened it fully so he avoided that during the night. Austėja wasn't in the hallway and Beor decided to look for her downstairs. If she wasn't there she was probably sneaking into his daddy's bed and he could follow her then.

Carefully, to not miss a step on the stairs, he made his way down and just as he considered petting the dogs, he saw something move in the kitchen.

"Austėja!" He tried to call her back to him, following her into the kitchen. He was tired and wanted to go back to bed. Right over Austėja's bowl there was a bright white light hovering

around. Beor stopped in the door, trying to find his cat but looking back at the light several times.

When he stepped inside the kitchen the light started to move quicker over the bowl and then came towards him, floating around face height. Beor stepped back slightly but stopped as the light came even closer and then started to float around him. He followed the light, turning around himself and lifted his hand up to touch it but it evaded him.

After another circle around him it started to fly towards the back door and Beor remembered why he was down here.

“Austėja?” He called again, trying to listen to any noise from the cat that would tell him where to look but there was nothing. Beor looked back at the light that now quickly circled around the doorknob.

He crossed the kitchen and unlocked the door, turning the knob with both hands to open it and pulled the door open. The light shot right out of the door but stopped on the porch, hovering around. After he didn’t move, it came back and circled around him before flying out on the porch again and this time Beor followed. Maybe it wanted to show him something. His interest was fully on the light now and he didn’t even notice that his stuffie dropped on the porch as he stepped down into the cold grass.

The light floated ahead of him by only a few feet and came back around regularly, circling him but flying away whenever Beor tried to catch it. Beor went after it quickly, trying to finally catch it.

Will yawned as he made his way down the hall to Beor’s room. His door always was open a bit so Austėja could leave during the night if she needed to. One look inside affirmed Will’s fear that the boy was not in bed. There only was a heap of blankets on the floor.

Will went inside and fixed the bed up before he went downstairs to see if Beor had needed something to drink before going back to bed. The dogs were sleeping as deeply as Hannibal and although Will was not quiet not one of them woke up when he walked by them.

He checked to see if he could spot Beor cuddled into one of their beds with them and then made his way into the kitchen. The back door was wide open, letting the cold in and Will’s blood turned to ice. He tried to calm himself down that Beor wouldn’t just sneak out of the house and crossed the room to close it. All the hopes he held onto shattered when he spotted Beor’s stuffie almost discarded on the porch. Will didn’t even take the time to grab a jacket. He picked up the stuffie and spotted a trail of little footsteps leading straight away from the house in the early wetness of the morning. He followed them as quickly as possible, clutching the stuffed animal to his chest.

When he reached the woods slightly out of breath, Will had to stop to find the trail again and followed it more closely. He had no idea how Beor managed to get this far in the little time

since they had gotten home and grew more and more worried about what happened.

It took him another ten minutes until he spotted Beor in front of him, determinedly putting one foot in front of the other, clearly in pursue of something Will couldn't see between the trees.

"Beor!" His voice was louder and sounded angrier than he intended to but the little boy didn't react at all. Will allowed himself to curse and ran after him.

Beor had stopped in a little clearing, his full concentration on the ball of light in front of him that clearly tried to entice him to step further.

Will called out for him again, panic clutching him as he realized what the light was. A Will-o-wisp trying to lure the boy into a trap he would never get out of, trying to take a child's life and soul for something.

Before Will was close enough to pull Beor into the safety of his arms someone else came to the rescue.

With a loud hiss and a war cry, Austėja jumped at the will-o-wisp, pawing at it furiously with her remaining front paw. She seemed to be double her usual size and her tail was the same size as the rest of her body as she hit the light several times, forcing it away from Beor.

The light started to expand and move around Austėja's head threateningly but she continued to paw at it while hissing. After a particular hard hit from her paw the light dimmed considerably and then shot away deeper into the woods with a loud voice that startled all of them.

Will had reached the clearing by now and sunk down on his knees, yanking Beor into his arms who started to cry in confusion, sinking against Will's chest.

He held him tightly, rubbing his back and Austėja came to them, headbutting Will's thigh affectionately and he scratched her remaining ear, whispering praises at her while trying to comfort Beor and get him to stop crying.

Beor seemed mostly unhurt although he was freezing and his feet were dirty and scratched open. Will handed him his stuffed animal and lifted him up, lifting Austėja up as well and handing her over to Beor and carried them home.

He put Beor and Austėja down on the couch and went into the bathroom to get a washcloth to clean their feet as well as anything he might need to treat any injuries.

When he returned Beor was deeply asleep, clutching both the cat and his stuffed animal against his chest. Will washed his feet, rubbing some life back into them and put some thick socks on him but nothing could wake the boy back up. After washing his own feet as well Will knew that he should get them into bed but he felt so dead tired that he laid down on the couch as well, pulling Beor close against his chest and pulling a blanket over them. He was asleep the second he closed his eyes.

Hannibal woke them up when he eventually rose around lunch, more than concerned what they were doing sleeping on the couch with the remains of their adventure still on them.

Beor refused to tell them about anything that had happened and refused to be alone for the rest of the day, a wish they gladly indulged. After Will recounted their adventure and they were all cleaned up and any injuries treated Austėja was awarded a triple portion of fresh fish and spent the rest of the day sleeping on Beor's lap on the couch. Will joined them after a while and not even Hannibal was ready to raise from his comfortable seat for anything but to cook for them.

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